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SECRECY CLOAK IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE CIA

UNDER public attack, the Central Intelligence agency has no recourse but to retreat into its folds of secrecy. It could not continue to operate as a hush-hush organization if all the charges and rumors about the CIA were dealt with publicly. But sometimes the allegations of mischief-making are so serious that the President himself must take account of what is being said. Mr. Kennedy has lately found himself in that uncomfortable position.

At his news conference last week, President Kennedy was asked about recent accounts of CIA activities in Vietnam. The stories charged that CIA policies were in conflict with other U. S. policies in that trouble zone. Calling the reports "wholly untrue," the President insisted that the CIA has loyally supported all U. S. policies. He noted that he confers at least twice a day with the director of the CIA, John A. McCone.

Presumably McCone was responsible for removing one John H. Richardson as head of the CIA mission in Vietnam. News dispatches from Saigon suggested that Richardson had become *persona non grata* to the U. S. ambassador, Henry Cabot Lodge. Another interpretation is that Richardson had to go, once he was publicly identified as a CIA agent. McCone, however, has thrown no light on the circumstances of Richardson's recall.

But, while McCone must remain silent, his predecessor in the top CIA post has taken the offensive. Allen Dulles has told an interviewer that the American spy apparatus is being made "the goat" for bungling in Vietnam. If there is confusion in that country, according to Dulles, it is due to lack of a clear-cut operational policy within the administration in Washington.

Thus accusations against the CIA are met with countercharges against its superiors in the executive branch of the government. One danger from such a development is that eager congressmen once more may be tempted to demand legislative restraints over the intelligence service.

We believe that such regulation would be both unnecessary and unwise. There is no assurance whatsoever that members of Congress would not discuss publicly matters that should be kept under wraps. They have done so repeatedly in matters of national security. The danger here is that a cloak-and-dagger operation would lose its effectiveness in the light of the day.

This country is dependent on the information-gathering resources of the CIA. The CIA is a useful instrument in the cause of Atomic-age survival. The facts about the organization cannot be known or judged by the public. We believe that Mr. Kennedy or any future President must be trusted to oversee the CIA and to keep it under control.